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The Church and Sex

Committee 5 of the Lambeth Conference reported—"*Sexual Intercourse is not by any means the only language of earthly love, but it is, in its full and right use, the most intimate and most revealing; it has the depths of communication signified by the biblical word so often used for it, "knowledge"; it is a giving and receiving in the unity of two free spirits which is in itself good (within the marriage bond) and mediates good to those who share it. Therefore it is utterly wrong to urge that, unless children are specifically desired, sexual intercourse is of the nature of sin*".

The unequivocal nature of this statement seemed somewhat revolutionary in Church circles, though to non-Christians it must have appeared a belated effort on the part of the Church to make sense of a subject about which for years it had talked nonsense. And even amongst Christians it seemed that the revolution had come

about through the demands of modern non-theological understanding. The pre-Lambeth pamplet *The Family in Contemporary Society* had said—"The Church, then, is called . . . . not . . . . to study in the abstract, but to study its theology in relation to the things that are—the 'given' by revelation together with the 'given' by situation". To both Christians and non-Christians therefore the Church in its Lambeth pronouncement seemed to be facing up to—or almost catching up with—a worldly situation which had outstripped it and which was thought to require a change of theological principle.

Few Anglicans protested against this change: few also have tried to explain in what light one should regard the powerful but now utterly repudiated legacy from the past. That a contemporary "given" situation can produce not only such a revolution but also such a lack of defence for the older tradition, indicates a profound displacement throughout society. It is in this light that the question can best be approached.

It is often forgotten that perhaps only fifty years ago the quoted statement by Committee 5 would probably have seemed as strange to most non-Christians as to Christians. Few people then (though such generalisations are dangerous) would have easily and confidently held that "sexual intercourse" was "the most intimate and revealing language of early love". They would probably have supposed more conventionally that earthly love within marriage was best expressed by a sense of care and responsibility both for the other partners and for children; and that outside marriage "love" (or what might be called "romantic love") was best expressed by a specific denial of sexual intercourse—a legacy from the age of chivalry. (How many novels before 1910 assume sex to be the natural language of love?) It seems that the idea of sexual intercourse being a primary means of achieving personal (and thus social) relationships is a comparatively recent one—as if it only arose, in fact, after the traditional "language of love" had somehow failed. The importance of sexual relationships only began to be stressed when the stronger ties that made them unimportant were fading.

The point of this generalisation, if true, is that it explains both the old tradition and the new revolution and invalidates neither. In the days of accepted standards both in society and in personal relationships, then it was these standards that primarily mattered and were the natural objects of Christian criticism; and the experiences of sex were either irrevelant or only of importance as it were negatively—when sexual behaviour had gone so wrong that its failure made customary behaviour impossible. But in days when such accepted standards have largely disappeared, then people inevitably have to search for less conventional and more private bonds to be the effective signs of love; and it is then that sexual

intercourse seems not only the natural way of achieving these bonds but sometimes almost the only one. Both attitudes are acceptances of historical situations ; and in neither case does it seem profitable to talk as if the *situations* could be improved, but only people's approach to them.

On this assessment, then, Christians should not only accept the revolutionary attitude towards sex that the Lambeth Conference authorised, but should also try to understand the reasons that made the traditions of the past so different. No proper "revolution" is in fact a reversal : it is rather a re-arrangement of emphasis to redress a balance that has grown top-heavy. But at the moment Anglicans seem in danger of supposing that previous generations of Churchmen were totally obtuse if not pathological about sex : having redressed the balance in one direction we appear on the point of sinking it in the other.

This danger is more than the formal one of contemporary *hubris*. It would be disastrous if we let our respect for the "given situation" run away with us, and not to try to understand the caution which in the past seemed so necessary.

There is one area in which both "traditional" Christians with their arguments from theological principles and "revolutionary" Christians with their existential attitudes to given situations can agree ;—that is, in the area of sexual practices outside marriage and of "unnatural" practices within marriage. Within this area the matters about which the Early Fathers made their dogmatic statements—fornication, pre-marital intercourse, homosexuality, various acts to prevent conception, etc.—are seen in a similar way resulting in the same code of morals also by those who would claim that such practices can be *experienced* to be contrary to love. (It is significant that modern psychological evidence concerning homosexuality shows that *love* between two homosexuals is only fostered if they practice mutual chastity.) This sort of realisation can give a confidence to Christian moralists which for years they lacked. Now it can be said that the Christian code of sexual morals is true because it *works :* in going against it you will experience a dissolution of love, and by keeping to it you will experience (and those around you) a growth of love.

The area then in which remains a disagreement between the traditionalists and the modern "existentialists", is that of the nature of the sexual act within recognised marriage.

In spite of varying details, the attitude of tradition was fairly specific about this. As Dr. Sherwin Bailey has put it (*The Man-Woman Relationship in Christian Thought*, p.232—reviewed later in this issue)—"Almost from the beginning we discern a markedly negative reaction to everything venereal (*i.e.* sexual) which has profoundly and adversely affected the character and development of Christian sexual ideas—a reaction expressed with every degree of intensity

from mild suspicion of apathy to violent hostility or revulsion . . . The conviction rapidly gained ground and became firmly entrenched in the early Church that coitus is not only in some sense unclean and defiling, but also intrinsically evil or sinful, either on the account of the concupiscence by which men and women are supposedly impelled thereto, or because of the sensual pleasure involved in the act." Both Augustine and Aquinas explained this conviction by stressing the compulsive and *irrational* nature of the act and the approach to it: man's conscious control of his faculties became weakened and indeed biologically impotent (the possibility of performing the act for the man at least depending on a physical process incapable of being ordered by the will), and the act itself resulted in sensation the opposite of rational. And this, to the mediaeval Schoolmen as well as to the early Fathers, meant going in opposition to God. So to them the whole business could only be justified theologically if the process were seen as the one by which children were conceived (a complete if somewhat grudging justification in the view of most writers)—or (far less completely and infinitely more grudging) as the means whereby husband and wife in a state of grace could give to each other mutual comfort—though this was still held to be inadmissible if it did not allow for the generation of children.

In opposition to all this, the modern "revolutionaries" argue that the contention that the sexual act and the approach to it are anti-rational is irrelevant, since we can no longer believe that rationality is man's only God-given faculty or indeed even the highest; and that in fact to pretend this is dangerous. It is the whole man, they argue, that is involved in any relationship; and the fact that in sexual relationship the instinctive and sensual faculties take over is not only not an evil, but even a necessary good.

Now in this disagreement the revolutionaries at first seem to have all the sense on their side: but there is one thing, and a very important one, that they seem to have overlooked. Dr. Bailey (one of the chief Anglican protagonists of the revolution) remarks in the passage of the book already quoted—"The causes of this attitude (the markedly negative reaction to everything venereal) . . . . undoubtedly lie deep in the remote history of the race". But he also says, and in the same sentence, that these causes "do not concern us here". But surely they should concern us: and causes that lie deep in the history of the race are hardly likely to be exaggerations of rationality. It seems probable therefore that there is some further and much more fundamental opposition to be taken into account than that between sex and reason. And the more fundamental question, whether or not it contains an opposition, is the one already mentioned—that of sex and love.

Now the concept of love, in the Christian sense, depends upon two qualities which must be present within it if the love is to be, as it

were, valid. One is the quality of the love being freely-given : an act of love is dependent on a choice having been made, at some level, by the free will of him who makes it. And the second quality is that of love costing the lover something in the process. What distinguishes an unselfish action from a selfish one, an act of true giving from a semblance of it which is still done for the giver's satisfaction, is just the experience of what Christians call *sacrifice*. These definitions are tentative and paradoxical (in that true satisfaction is found when it is not sought) ; but without them it is difficult to give any realisable meaning to the Christian idea of love.

In this light then there does seem to be an opposition or at least separation between sex and love, because it is difficult to reconcile the experience of sexuality with the idea that a free choice of will has been made costing the giver something in the process. Although there is obviously a sense in which the act both can and must be done "freely", this is hardly a relevant one in the context, and the idea of sacrifice is even less so. The Lambeth Report itself seems to contain a contradiction here when it talked of the "goodness" of sexual intercourse and yet was even more emphatic about the "goodness" of sexual abstinence. This itself implied an opposition between sex and love : because there is no Christian definition of love by which it would be good to abstain from it, whereas the power and goodness of some sexual abstinence must to a Christian seem undeniable. So that to claim that sex is "the most intimate and revealing language of earthly love" would appear, in the light of even the most tentative enquiries beneath the surface, to be equivocal. And it is odd that the Lambeth bishops did not recognise this ; and that the protagonists of the modern "revolution" can write so much about the nature of sex without going so deep, or indeed hardly at all, into the nature of love. For it is love of course that matters.

However to say this—that there is an opposition or at least a separation between sex and love and that it is love that matters—does not imply (as some people would suppose together with the early fathers) that sex is somehow an evil, or something to be ignored or repressed. To suggest this would be to fall into the very error that we now claim the fathers perpetrated—that of using rationality to make patterns where the disciplines of reason do not apply. The whole business of personality, and relationships, is beyond the rule of reason which cannot tolerate paradoxes but only the demands of "either/or". The proper way to look upon the separation between love and sex is rather one of seeing that although love is what fundamentally matters and sex does not fundamentally matter, there is yet an area in which sex can very powerfully affect for good or ill the requirements of love : and the proper way of seeing a hostility between sex and love is one not of fear or repression, but of sensible efforts to find the actions whereby the hostility can be dealt with. All this may seem obvious : but the difficulties people have in

taking in these terms rather than those of rationality can best be illustrated by taking two instances which have caused Christian misunderstanding for centuries.

St. Paul's opinion about his preference for the celibate state, and about marriage being in some senses a precautionary step rather than a positive one, has caused his detractors to call him pathological and even his admirers to explain that he was a child of his time writing in expectation of the end of the world: but in fact, if one examines the context of "love" in which he was writing, he was talking common sense arising from his faith and theology. If to love is to make a choice, to give sacrificially for the sake of God or of others, and if this on the spiritual level is what is effective, then the choice of celibacy on this level is effective in a way that marriage cannot be. This is not to say that there are not a multitude of celebates who are celibates for different (and less effective) reasons; nor that there are not an infinity of ways in which a married couple can act just as sacrificially within the state of marriage; but it is clear that St. Paul would not have denied this. He was only making a specific statement about a special power of celibacy: and the misunderstandings which have arisen from his opinion come from an insistence that to call something a precaution must be derogatory. But Christian experience shows this is not so. To state in the abstract that because an action is precautionary it must in its nature be second best is in Christian terms meaningless, because no one can do "better" than what God calls him to do or what God gives him the strength to do; and if what is necessary for man is to marry then there is nothing better for him than to do it.

The other and more modern bone of contention has been that about birth control. Again rationally there are two camps who contend on the one hand that the "perfect" Christian marriage would not tolerate any practices of birth control; and on the other that the actual situation of "imperfect" marriage makes the use of certain methods not only sensible but necessary. The upholders of these two points of view often imagine their positions are irreconcilable: where as it would be more sensible (as is nowadays increasingly being admitted) that they can both be perfectly valid at the same time. The fact that there is a level of perfection to be aimed at does not lessen a responsibility not to try to act impossibly within a situation: nor does it mean that to recognise this is to admit an impropriety.

These two illustrations help to show a view of sex that might properly be encouraged—that of not being fundamental in relationships but yet in circumstances immensely powerful (and powerful for destruction as well as for creation) and for this reason necessary to be handled in a Christian way for "good". If marriage itself is in some sense mysterious and equivocal (we are told that there will be

no marriage in heaven ; and the analogy between marriage and the relationship between Christ and His Church is itself equivocal, since this relationship at least on earth has not always seemed a happy one) then sexuality can be seen in this light too. In this sense it becomes *not* the direct means by which (as some modern apologists might have us believe) the highest good in relationships can be obtained, but rather that necessary and proper conjunction without which the struggle for the highest good would often be unbearable and for some on their own impossible—a necessity for the personality like sleep for the body, not in itself either spiritually constructive or destructive and only possibly in this sense constructive when it is being given up—but still something vital, in the order of things, and from which indeed by the grace of God greater blessings may come than might seem likely. Because it is patently evident that God does bless it.

But this blessing comes, it seems, only if God is being loved as is required. Earlier in this argument it might have appeared that the definition of "love" as something freely willed and sacrificial was itself falling into the error of the early fathers were accused—treating "rationally" what belongs to the experience of the whole personality. And this objection would be valid from a humanist. But for a Christian the very possibility of free-will and sacrifice depends on their being used and offered in Christ ; and this offering itself depends on the "living" of the whole personality. It depends on what he trusts and does in the whole life of prayer and worship—which is the aim as well as the cause of free-will and without which freedom is meaningless. The Christian *experience* of love too would seem to bear this out : the free giving of sexuality has to be contained within the sacrament of marriage ; and even within the marriage the "mutual help and comfort" of sexuality must not come first or else an inward-turning and unfruitfulness in marriage is observable. A marriage in which love is truly experienced both within and from without is one in which difficult sexual disciplines are both understood and practised : but also, one in which priorities are known in order.

What blessings marriage depend on, then, is not a concentration on the sexual act itself as the most likely way to these blessings, but rather on a whole world of actions and choices within the strict definition of the Christian idea of "loving"—upon unselfishness and sacrifice and the sense of the primary demands of God. Once these are being observed or attempted, it is true that within such a marriage the act of sex may be experienced as a human sign of the great grace bestowed—an experience not dependent upon man for its achievement but only received by him mysteriously as God's gift. But it is the ways of loving that are within his control that we should be considering—those who are married much the same as those who are not—and we should relegate discussion of sex to the secondary plane upon which for so long it rested. What is required

is more talk, in fact, about what might be called Family Spirituality; and then the whole business of sex might fall into its proper perspective and even its proper practice. We have entitled this number of PRISM, *The Church and Sex:* but we should like to get back (as our following articles try to do) to the more fundamental subject —that of the Church, and with it the Family, and Love.

Marriage Guidance

CHARLES DAVEY

The invitation to discuss the Church's teaching about Sex, in the light both of the pronouncements of the Lambeth Conference and of this journal's editorial criticisms of them, from the special point of view of the Marriage Guidance Counsellor, raises certain immediate difficulties. First, the rule of confidence in counselling interviews, which is absolute in Marriage Guidance, precludes any reference to specific cases—even if specific situations could be regarded as providing a sufficient basis for general pronouncements. I can only engage in the general theological discussion, hoping that my experience of case-work may contribute something of practical relevance to my generalisations and may help to keep the subjective element in check. Secondly, however, comes the difficulty that Marriage Guidance is not exclusively a Christian affair, although probably the majority of those engaged in it are Christians of some kind. So, in a matter of Christian theology it is impossible for me to speak as it were representatively. These are the views of an Anglican priest-psychotherapist who is deeply committed to the work of Marriage Guidance, but not those of the movement as a whole.

With these preliminary reservations, let me say directly that I am in general agreement with your editorial view that the report of Committee 5 of the Lambeth Conference, however much it is to be welcomed as "almost catching up with . . . a (required) change of theological principle" is nevertheless open to serious criticisms: that I sympathise with the line of criticism set out in your editorial: but that I regard this as itself inadequate on pragmatic and theological grounds.

First, I regard the statement of the report that "Sexual intercourse . . . . is, in its full and right use, the most intimate and most revealing

(language of earthly love)" as nonsense. A question of meaning is of course involved. If the word "earthly" is intended to restrict consideration in some way to communication at the level of "flesh" (to borrow from St. Paul's technical language), then the statement becomes slightly more defensible: but it is hard to see how this can be so in the light of the phrase "in its full and right use", which can scarcely, for Christians, exclude the level of "spirit". If the statement is intended to cover all possible levels of human communication in this life, it would imply among other things that because our Lord did not marry, He was never in the course of His earthly existence able to speak "the most intimate and most revealing language of earthly love". Which is absurd.

Furthermore, the employment of the phrase "full and right use" is an example of the kind of statement which vitiates so much Christian thinking—like talking about "perfect marriages". None of us makes "full and right use" of our sexuality, or of sexual intercourse in marriage: we only come as near to doing so as our imperfection will permit. None of us can use this kind of language meaningfully, except as aspiration: and to do so as if we were discussing actual possibilities is enormously harmful. As the editorial says in a similar context: "the fact that there is a level of perfection to be aimed at does not lessen a responsibility not to try to act impossibly within a situation". Or, I would add, to talk impossibly.

I am then in full agreement with the contention of the editorial that we cannot merely jettison the older traditional emphasis of Christian theology as so much lumber, still less as merely pathological. I would claim that in practice the possibility of communication by means of the sexual act is always impaired by any attempt to treat it as something which can stand in its own right: still more, that any attempt to establish a love-relationship on the foundation of sexual "knowledge" (in the Biblical sense of the word) fails, even if the sexual relationship is apparently initially successful, where there is no adequate relationship of a deeper kind. Where the foundation itself has cracks in it, as it usually has, the failure comes about more rapidly. The most that can be claimed for sexual intercourse at all realistically is that it can be *a* most intimate and most revealing medium of communication in the right setting: but that, like all other means of communication, everything depends on the *persons* who are using it and on what they are communicating (not merely trying to communicate).

In so far as the traditional Christian teaching was saying this, or was concerned to set forth what is the right kind of setting, there is no need for us to abandon it at all. Nevertheless it is obvious, as the quotation from Sherwin Bailey points out, that the traditional Christian attitude was severely infected by other elements which can only be called pathological. The best survey of this known to me is by W. Graham Cole in *Sex in Christianity and Psycho-analysis*, which argues that the pathological element is not found in the Biblical

tradition nor in our Lord's teachings, though St. Paul is not entirely free from it; but that it comes in from Hellenistic sources during the early centuries of the Church's life and was not completely conquered. Exactly the same pathological elements are found, to a greater or less degree, in the problems with which we are confronted: guilt about sexuality, fear or even repulsion in face of its manifestations in the self or the partner, and all kinds of reaction-formations and neurotic symptoms due to the repression of sexual drives as a result of guilt and fear. (Sex is not the only instinctual element in us which suffers this fate, but we need not look further for our immediate purpose.) Where these pathological elements are present (and I take leave to doubt whether any of us is entirely free of them) not only is the sexual avenue of communication fouled or even blocked, but this becomes a severe handicap to other media of communication into the bargain.

We may therefore welcome the modern attempt to attack the pathological elements in the traditional Christian approach to sex (as well as in ourselves), so long as we recognise that it is the way of revolutions to go too far and to claim too much. Here I agree with your editorial dictum that we can only do this effectively if we understand their causes; and that at bottom these are to be seen in terms of a split between sex and love. This split comes about, indeed, deep in the history of the race: but in practice it is more useful to seek its origin at a point more accessible to understanding and to therapy, deep in the early experience of the individual. (The two notions are not mutually exclusive.)

Now this could lead straight into an extensive survey of psychological theory. Let me generalise wildly and say that in my view the split comes about largely because infantile love, whose earliest expressions are pre-genital but which moves rapidly towards the point at which sexual desires naturally awaken, has inevitably to encounter frustration at the sexual level. At this stage everything depends on how the situation is dealt with: but what usually happens is that the child learns (sometimes is specifically taught) that "Love is all right but sex isn't". Since the tension continues until at least the age at which marriage is possible, the lesson is driven well home. Since the growing child is quite unable to get rid of the sexual drives, small wonder that he or she usually faces a choice between repression (shutting them off somehow) and immorality (if all sexual activity and even thinking and dreaming is so labelled).

So long as sexuality—not only coitus, but "concupiscence" and "sensual pleasure"—is regarded as "intrinsically evil and sinful", so long will this split continue and grow wider, and so long will its effects be felt not only in the life of the individual but even within marriage, even when children are to be conceived or the mutual comfort of husband and wife to be sought. The extreme form of it on the masculine side is the classical statement of male impotence:

"I can be sexually potent with a woman for whom I have no regard (*e.g.* a prostitute), though I feel guilty about this : but with a woman whom I love (*e.g.* my wife) I cannot function sexually at all". Here love and sex have become entirely divorced—it might be even truer to say (quite literally) that they have become legally separated.

Clearly the true Christian task is to heal this split—or at an earlier level, to prevent it from coming into existence—so that sex can fulfil its true rôle as an expression of love (*not* as the only, or the primary, or the best expression of it, but as a very important one) in the proper setting. How is this to be done? Here I would agree with your editorial that the means is to be sought in a proper understanding of what love means ; but I must part company both with the editor and with Lambeth as regards the practical application of this understanding.

I have no quarrel with the editorial statement of the two qualities which must be present in love as the Christian understands it : it must be freely given, and it must contain an element of sacrifice. The vital issue for me lies in how these two elements are to be regarded.

The commonest Christian way of applying them in sexual matters has been to denounce selfishness and belaud unselfishness. So Lambeth (Resolution 113) "The sins of self-indulgence and sensuality, born of selfishness and a refusal to accept marriage as a divine vocation, destroy its true nature . . ." You say "What distinguishes an unselfish action from a selfish one, an act of true giving from *a semblance of it which is still done for the giver's satisfaction*, is just the experience of what Christians call sacrifice". Now with all respect this to me is another nonsense, of precisely the same kind as we have already discussed. It sets out as essential (by implication at least) a quality of selflessness which nowhere exists.

It is not surprising that you go on to say "It is difficult to reconcile the experience of sexuality with the idea that a free choice of will has been made costing the giver something in the process". Indeed it is, if you insist on thinking in terms of selfishness/unselfishness. Does any of us ever make a gift which does not satisfy ourselves in some way? Did not our Lord say that it was more blessed to give than to receive? Do we imagine that he meant "to give miserably?" —or "without satisfaction"? Does not the Lord love a cheerful giver?

In fact our Lord never made this distinction between selfish and unselfish, still less used "selfish" as a term of moral reproach. He was too much of a realist. The truth is that we are all selfish—inevitably and inescapably centred in selfhood in some sense—and as the editorial rightly says, it is extremely difficult even to imagine the sexual act without an involvement of the self in its sensual and emotional pleasure. If it is demanded of us that we cease to be selfish, sexuality becomes impossible (except perhaps for the schizophrenic). Our Lord's demand was that we should love

our neighbour as ourselves: which in this context I would take to mean that I should not seek to enjoy my own sexual pleasure regardless of the satisfaction of my wife; that I seek, as it were, to share my inescapable selfishness in a relationship, rather than hug it to myself.

Now this does in fact involve both a free choice of will and an element of sacrifice. To name the choices is to make the sacrifices plain. I have to choose which of many desirable women I will marry, whether I will restrict my sexual life to her alone, whether our partnership is to be restricted to our mutual satisfaction or whether we shall have children (demanding creatures, children!); whether I shall regard my wife as primarily an instrument of my pleasure or as an equal person with myself—and so on. Having made the choices, I am then involved in the sacrifice of everything I have not so chosen. These restrictions may sometimes be irksome—if for instance I choose a wife whose sexual desires are ill-attuned to my own, the results for us both may well be extremely painful. But on the whole, in Christian marriage we do not greatly stress the painfulness of the sacrifices: because surely the Christian insight is not that I make these choices or these sacrifices because I am "unselfish", following the strict and demanding path of moral duty, but because I have been given to see something better worth having than mere sensual satisfaction in the love, the *personal* relationship, between us. In our Lord's phrase, "for joy thereof" I will indeed sell all that I have: and this is not the negation of my selfhood, though it may involve a great deal of self-denial *en route*, but rather its fulfilment. Maybe one day it will lead me to the transcending of my selfhood. "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be". "Not as though I had already attained . . . ."

In practice—to return finally to what I conceive to be my brief—this means that when husband and wife are at loggerheads over their conflicting desires; or when the young are involved in the tensions of unsatisfiable urges; it is neither truly Christian nor ethically valuable (except in the shortest of short-term views) to tell them that they ought not to be selfish. Humanly speaking, the only answer to this is, "But I *am* selfish: so what?" Tell them instead that their desires are perfectly natural—but in their present situation unattainable (or so costly, in some real sense, as to be undesirable as well as desirable). No, don't tell them: who are we to decide such things for others? Help them to see it for themselves. Then, as Christians, it may be possible to proclaim our Gospel that the way to save one's life is to lose it. But I doubt whether we can ever do this except in a community, not of the morally superior (God forgive us!) but of those who are committed in all their frailty to following a victorious Saviour, if need be through the gates of death to a resurrection, not in our power but in His.

In Praise of Love

W. H. Allchin

When I first went to carry out psychiatric interviews at a prison in London, I was surprised at the apparently large number of sexual offenders who came to see me. Eventually I asked the prison officer how the cases were selected and he told me that the men were picked out because it was known that psychiatrists liked the "sex cases". Such views are not confined to prison circles, and for many people the name of Freud still suggests ideas of sexual promiscuity and various forms of immoral behaviour.

Some may think that the title of this article is more redolent of Plato's symposium than of the doctor's clinical notes. If that is the case, then so much the better ; for clinical notes are by no means as objective as some of us would like to think, especially when we are dealing with such a complex and emotion-laden topic.

It might be called the unspeakable topic. Many patients still come along in profound and fearful ignorance about sexual matters. Children and adolescents, particularly, are puzzled : they know that something must be going on under cover of the conspiring silence. The anger that greeted Freud's breaking of the silence is not yet abated, and many will remember the hostile reception which the work of Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin received in 1948.

Studies of sexual behaviour have been made all over the world, in something like 190 societies, as far apart as the Arctic Circle and the southernmost tip of Australia. They have been made from the biological standpoint, and discussion of the rightness or wrongness of any particular type of sexual activity has been avoided.

Normality in this field emerges as a statistical concept, referring to the type of behaviour manifested by the majority of the population under study.

The idea of unnatural behaviour has to be given up, for deviations of all kinds are observed in nature, and are therefore natural, although not necessarily normal in the sense just stated. Deviations from the normal are of significance but they do not seem to allow of moral evaluation, without careful investigation of their inner meaning.

The concept of the Trinity is that of Relationship where the parties are in perfect accord with one another and yet remain perfectly themselves. It is for this reason that we ascribe to our trinitarian God the name of Love. The working out of relationships on this pattern is the task of the human being, living in space and time, and expressing himself in intellectual, emotional and physical terms. Sex is one of the most potent of our biological drives and it is

that power which draws human beings to each other. It makes us able to break down, to some extent, our fundamental and terrifying isolation, so that we can enter into communion with another. It must be understood in the context of the general state of development of the organism itself. Both Freud and Jung have set out the idea of personality in the process of development and they have shown how, from infancy onwards, there can be an increasing degree of self-awareness and self-control. This process never seems to reach completion, so that no human being can be charged with complete responsibility for all his actions. We accept the fact that children cannot be as responsible for themselves as adults, and we have come to accept the fact that some adults remain children as far as their intellectual function is concerned. But when emotional attitudes or sexual behaviour are under scrutiny we often find quite impossible demands being made.

Each human being can, however, properly be charged with the task of becoming more aware and of learning to take responsibility for himself and his unconscious. But the demands made must be appropriate to the individual's stage of development, and it seems probable that many do not reach the point of being able to make moral or immoral decisions. The promiscuous sexual behaviour of the deprived child turned adolescent cannot simply be labelled as bad or wicked. It can be understood as a desperate attempt to seek comfort, safety and dependence. Behind the painted, whorish facade is the pale drawn face of the depressed child. In states of low or precarious self-esteem, it is not surprising that sexual capacities should seem to be the only remaining assets. To be punished for their attempted exploitation can lead to complete despair and feelings of utter worthlessness. In fact, sexual behaviour has to be evaluated in the light of the developmental stage of the whole personality. Depth psychology has demonstrated beyond doubt that without love normal psychological development does not take place. Those who grow up unloved will find themselves incapable of giving love or receiving it. We use such phrases as the "frozen child" or the "affectionless character" to describe something of the clinical manifestations of these states.

At the other end of the scale we find that the all-providing, want-anticipating mother has eventually to wean the child and let it go: otherwise her love turns into something possessive and devouring, and the child must escape from it if it is to survive as a psychological entity.

It is clear that sexual behaviour refers to something more than reproduction. For evolutionary development has left civilized man with a surplus of reproductive capacity. To assert otherwise is to delude ourselves.

It is becoming clear, too, that the conventional male and female roles are delineated far too rigidly. Psychological development does not always run parallel with physique. So there are men who

wish to be women sometimes to the extent of attempting to make the necessary physical alterations. And there are women whose life pattern expresses the envy of a man and the desire to be equipped as he is. Such anomalies cause alarm and stir up anxieties in all of us. Because of this, adult male homosexuality, for example, is still subject to the most primitive social sanctions.

It is primarily a psychological problem, but all too frequently morality is dragged into the discussion. Yet faced with the problem of the human being sitting with you in the consulting-room it becomes evident that morality does not, at the stage I am talking about, begin to enter the picture. For morality implies conscious choice. Most sexual problems fall outside this area, for much action is unconsciously motivated and the consciously desired end is never attained. Much of what passes for sexual immorality is a striving to receive love (sometimes with an insatiable longing) or to give it. The compulsive, repetitive and unadaptive nature of such activity makes it out as belonging to sickness rather than to wickedness. The man charged with persistently importuning male persons in a public place turns out to be not the seductive, attractive person of our fantasy, but a frigid, frightened one risking everything for the chance of a fleeting contact which will assuage his inner pain. But inside the sickness may be the health, that compound of physical and non-physical passion, which has something to do with love. Without it our lives would be nothing ; for without it there could be no striving for union with God or with another human being.

The Mother's Part

Elizabeth Montefiore

In a sick society like ours, it is not surprising that the image of love should have become deformed : we tend to think of love between parents and children in terms of the Oedipus complex, of that between members of the same sex in terms of the Wolfenden Report, and of love between men and women in terms of unchastity and divorce. In addition love itself tends to be thought of entirely in terms of sex ; we start from sex and discuss its evolution into love. This is surely completely wrong. Love starts with God : sexual love was created by Him and *can* express His love, and all human love must have as its touchstone that which we know incompletely but sufficiently. We are able to say of the love of God that it is self-giving,

that it wills only the good of its object, that it is joyous and that it is all this without end or limit. In the love that is in heaven no sacrifice exists because God cannot be diminished by His self-giving; but on earth because of sin love must also be sacrificial in order to be selfless. Some people would say that even in marriage sexual love cannot truly mirror divine love because it is so much concerned with the satisfaction of longing. I think this is untrue. Where if not in marriage can we learn to give ourselves without reservation, desiring not our own but our husband's or wife's happiness, and laying aside (sacrificing) privacy and shame, and this in *all* departments of life? William Blake put it very well:

> Love seeketh not itself to please,
> Nor for itself hath any care,
> But for another gives its ease,
> And build a Heaven in Hell's despair.*

Yet, although I think we can say that sexual love in marriage can mirror divine love, and that it is "the most intimate and revealing *language* of earthly love", I do not think we should see it as a *pattern*. The theory of romantic monogamous love has a long and fascinating history, but it is peculiar to the Western World, and although it is our norm, it did not lie behind the marriage in Cana which Christ adorned with His presence. Marriage, surely, is a school in which we learn divine love, at the same time as we exercise an earthly love and fulfill the purpose for which it exists. To discover divine love is man's chief end whether he be married or single, and we can have nothing to do with a theory of love which suggests or implies that the unmarried are in any way incomplete because they are unmarried. The Christian's chief business is to seek the Lord's present will, now in the next ten minutes, and try to do it, and whether he or she is married or not will affect only the *kind* of thing he or she does.

For a married woman with a family the area of the Christian obedience is clear enough; the pleasures and discomforts, the diciplines, joys and sorrows of family life are in the end a means whereby the will of God begins to be made perfect in her, and she is in any case doing a job of shattering importance and difficulty. Through his mother the infant child discovers his five senses, the exterior world, God, the power to love and to hate, the physical expression of love (people do not often admit the sensuous pleasure of handling one's children but it is real and good), his moral sense—the list could go on but is sufficiently sobering. Who indeed is sufficient for these things? Luckily we all go on having babies and doing "This little pig went to market" on their toes without stopping to think.

* He goes on to describe a "love" with which we are equally familiar:

> Love seeketh only self to please,
> To bind another to its delight.

All the same I believe there are times of action in family life which Christians should deliberately adopt if they are to be faithful parents. First among these I would place the habit of, as it were, taking stock. It is terribly easy to continue for too long a line of action that has been successful, like always producing the same pudding on Sunday because D. once liked it although now he is dying for a change. It is here that one's husband can help because he is immersed in the family less and can view it with more detachment. A mother needs to be on her guard against confusing the biological instinct to feed and protect with the virtue of unselfishness. No mother, I think, finds the least difficulty in doing without a sausage so long as the family have them. This normally surprises men and it often takes them some time to realize that it is their duty to introduce their wives to what may be called the High Selfishness. With detachment must go the exercise of intelligence, the kind of intelligence that asks itself "why is my two-year-old behaving like this?", "Why do I mind this so much?", "Why is my six-year-old sucking her thumb so madly?" and tries to see how any given situation may be appearing to the children concerned. Oddly enough the practice of sacramental confession does a great deal to help form the habit of mind.

Secondly, we have to face the fact that our children will learn from us not what we tell them but what we are. Their sight is clear unless we have dulled it. We may love them, and teach them formal prayers, and our family life may be happy; nonetheless, if our secret values are material, if we value our friends according to their importance, then our children will learn that too. Love is indeed a "lord of terrible aspect", and those whom we love are by no means safe with us simply because we love them. Like most of my generation I have always been very thankful *not* to have been a Victorian; but I was lately lent an early edition of Mrs. Beeton and was struck by her serene assumption that "Household Management" requires the continual practice of courtesy and self-discipline and a deliberate effort to secure the well-being of one's husband, children and servants. We could cultivate the virtue of courtesy more than we do; it is nothing less than one of the languages of divine love and not at all easy. If it exists in our homes our children will learn it.

Thirdly we have to face the fact that in the world in which we live Christians are a minority, and that the world as ever is the enemy of Christ. How are we to arm our children against it? Perhaps by not arming them at all. Two things we can do; and the first is to love truth and teach our children to love it, however inconvenient the consequences. I am not thinking of George Washington and the cherry tree, but of how as our children grow older we must teach them to question conventionally accepted ideas, and to want to know what is true so far as it can be known. For instance we value chastity. We certainly owe it to our children

that they should understand how their bodies and emotions work and what Christianity has to say about sex. We must tell them too, however obvious this may be, that the world makes trivial and distorts sex. But we must be honest, and we should not pretend that sins of the flesh are final and mortal when we know that the sins of the spirit—pride, covetousness, resentment, malice—are infinitely more corrosive. Obviously, we must be careful not to force intellectual difficulties on a child; but we can teach them to offer and to look for evidence and to verify their references!

Secondly, we have to remember that our responsibility as parents though great, is not final. It is God who has the care of our children's souls and not we. We do what we can to teach them to know and to love the Lord, through the bedlam of their early years, and through the entrancing period when their minds are growing and exploring. Remorselessly they grow up and we have to stand on one side, putting from us responsibility for the persons they are to be, assisting in the birth from the womb of the family into the world outside. I do not say that this is easy. Children are maddening, dirty, untidy, and quarrelsome and their buttons come off when they are already three minutes late for school; but it is in their company that we hear most often the thundering seas of eternity. It is they who in the racing years continually pierce our hearts with sudden delight. No wonder that parents sometimes try to prolong their children's childhood. Here, too, our children are not safe from us if we love only them. This delight also we must be ready to lay aside; this death we must undergo with other daily deaths if we are to enter into the love "that moves the sun and the stars".

Comment

One of the most striking things about editing this number of *Prism* has been our failure (after several efforts) to get any article from the father's point of view to match the excellent one by Mrs. Montefiore from a mother's. It seems that Christian fathers either don't like thinking about these things; or else are so busy dealing with the troubles resulting from other fathers not thinking, that they have no time to write.

The father's rôle is obviously at the centre of the whole business. He is the head of the family and the one who, by his care and example, can give those around him freedom away from the anomalies and towards the right attitudes of love with which the foregoing pages have been concerned. Most fathers would admit

this: and yet there is curiously little care about its application. In families, schools, universities, and perhaps most noticeably of all in the Church, there are few men nowadays who are looked upon instinctively as father-figures—as men of wisdom and authority to whom young people in confusion naturally turn. We have excellent counsellors who do such jobs professionally; but few, it seems, who do it as just part of their family lives.

It does not take a Freudian nor even an exponent of modern popular psychology to point out the connection between this lack and the moral chaos of the contempory scene. As Mrs. Montefiore points out, it is through the mother that the child discovers his five senses, the external world, God, and the power to love and hate. Mrs. Montefiore also adds "his moral sense"—but it is in this field that the father too plays one of his most important parts—and again by what he *is* rather than what he says. His children learn from his attitude to both themselves and other people; they discover what he *cares* about. They learn also not only about right and wrong and justice as categories of behaviour, but about the love that does not condemn the wrong-doers but only the things that they do. This is a discipline that can only be learnt by example.

As our book-reviewer points out later in this issue, the father's rôle is not immediate in his nature in the same way that the mother's is. But for this very reason he can view it more consciously and dispassionately. Because he has to learn it himself, he can more easily be a teacher. He can tell his children the way life works; he can judge their quarrels and difficulties; he can be an authority which does not have to threaten and to punish, but to order things simply by his care and attention. Children have an extraordinary recognition of justice as well as of love. If an order is just, and is explained to them by someone who they know loves them, they will do it contentedly even if they do not like it. It is only when parents have lost control of justice and love that they lose control of their children. It may then be very difficult for others to get back either the love or the control.

One of the things a mother can do is to help a father to discover his rôle. Perhaps a way of starting this is to encourage him to watch one of his children being born. This is an experience of such primitive sympathy and wonder that itself seems to generate love. Then a mother can enrol the father to help with the baby's nursing and feeding; not only as a stop-gap but as a partner. A man has no idea what a child is like until he has to care for it. Yet when he learns this, he learns more not only about his children as they grow up but about all humanity.

It is in the father's relationship with the mother that the pattern of adult relationships is transmitted to children. If the love between mother and father is self-regarding and self-demanding, then the children become self-regarding not only in imitation but because they are hurt. If the father's and mother's love is outwards and

caring, then the children will turn outwards too because they will be free. Psychology has a ruthless logic about it.

The whole aim of parenthood is to love in order that the children may grow up free. A child who has not been loved is not free because it is haunted by insecurity: a child who has been spoilt but not set free is haunted by guilt and infantilism. The failure of parents reverberates for generations.

And what has all this to do with sex? But the point is, as most writers in this symposium have been saying, that if the love is being looked after from earliest childhood then the sex can look after itself. And even after sex has, for lack of love, become so disturbed in a person that it makes it impossible for him to love in his turn—still, even here, the only answer is for other people to love him without hope of immediate response; not to be outraged by him; to suffer him. It is in the power of most people to care for others simply by cheerfully putting up with them: it is only the satisfied and the very proud who reject this. But few even of these remain so for ever.

There is however one thing specifically to be said about sex. We are in an age where sexual disturbance has as it were taken over publicly—in entertainment, in advertising, in conventions. London has become an area more notorious for perverse sexual peep-shows than Hamburg. Personal reputations nowadays are no longer ruined by abnormal sexual behaviour, but are in some professions even made by them. The old restraints upon the sexual habits of society have gone: and however much this results in a lessening of hypocrisy, it results also in an obliteration of all sexual discipline amongst adolescents other than those implanted in them by personal love. The need for this to be understood by parents and especially by fathers is urgent. If we do not tackle it, we are sending our children out into a world by which they are in danger with no weapons to fight with.

We must have more trust. We must believe that if we tell them the truth, and take care to try to show what the truth is, then they will be looked after. We must also have courage. If for a father to care for his children in a day-to-day practical sense—to "take them on" upon the same level that the mother does—requires facing up to a responsibility to which he is unaccustomed, then this is all the more reason why he must acquire it. He must study the subject; learn both of love and psychology: if he disagrees with the jargon of psychologists, then he must produce a better one himself. But they are talking about experiences that he is often regrettably lacking in.

Is all this too difficult for busy Christians? It may seem so. But fathers should try it, and see. They will probably find it is one of the things that will keep them better Christians as well as busier. They will almost certainly also discover things they did not know about themselves. Loving children is a way, it seems, of killing at least two Oedipus-birds with one stone.

Married or Celibate Priests?

1. Married

George Brassington

The central tenet of the argument for celibacy is that the priest is undivided in his loyalty to Christ and does not have the overwhelming difficulty of reconciling the two vocations, to marriage and to the priesthood. The celibate can give himself wholly to God's work in the parish, in a life which is all-consuming in its demands of time, sacrifice and obedience. Partially, the error here is that this view starts from the presuppositions of a doctrine of the ministry, whereas our study should begin with a doctrine of man and his vocation and then proceed to a doctrine of Church and ministry. We believe in a God who is a Creator, and in Genesis we find that He created male and female as His chosen creatures; they were blessed, to be fruitful and to multiply, to replenish the earth and to subdue it, as one flesh. Our Lord developed the Old Testament concepts and said that for this cause a man shall leave father and mother, to cleave to his wife. A new social unit is established, to share in God's act of creation by bearing the children who will praise Him. Judaism never thought of the marriage bond and its sexual consummation as an impure one; rather it was something holy and a symbol of the unity between Israel and her God. It is only when a strong ascetical and platonic spirit in the church urges men to hold false views on the body that a new and harsh note creeps into Christian thinking on marriage.

My first criticism of celibacy as the normal pattern is that it is too *individualistic* and often results in a limited pattern of spirituality, for those called to train souls are denied the oneness of the marriage bond. It is often suggested that we must attempt to save our own souls and then those of other people. The Bible knows no such individuality, and the sense of corporateness in the Israel of the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New with the emphasis upon the unity of our salvation in Christ, the new Adam. Man is never an island, and if he is to love God then he must love his fellow-men. We are linked inextricably both as members of the human race and as those called to be the Church. If there is this link then the normal pattern will be for the ordained minister to share the common life. We must beware of an acceptance, explicitly or implicity, of a doctrine of two standards, that the individual who has forsaken physical ties has made a greater sacrifice than the person living the normal family life. To suggest that the prayer-life of a married priest suffers is to

imply two standards of holiness in priests (celibate and married), a difference in holiness between priest and people, and ignores the many new opportunities for prayer which arise in a family circle. We must emphasize that holiness has been achieved in Christ and life is the realising of what already has been given. Christianity has no place for a mysticism which can only be reached by forsaking the common ties of humanity. Moreover it would be a great spiritual trial for the celibate, if he knew that his sacrifice was greater than the married priest's.

If our assumption that the family unit is created by God is correct, then the Church in any parish is a collection of such units. The Church is the family of God and so it seems logical that the spiritual head of the local congregation should share the same earthly responsibilities as the flock. In 1 Tim. 3 : 4-5 it is suggested that the headship of the family is akin to the headship of the local congregation : Paul assumed a married clergy when he gave directions for the conduct of their personal lives. As Clement of Alexandria wrote :

> "The Epistles preserve the harmony of the law and the gospel and approve both the man who with thanks to God enters upon marriage with sobriety and the man who in accordance with the Lord's will lives as a celibate, even as each individual is called, making his choice without blemish and in perfection."
>
> (XII 8b *trans.* H. Chadwick, *S.C.M. Press*).

The celibate view defines too narrowly the spiritual work of a pastor and separates it from the foundations of his life, reflecting a false doctrine of work. Any work done well is spiritual in the sense that God is glorified through it and therefore it is an act of worship. For the clergyman, the trivialities of parochial life can be just as much acts of worship as the time spent on more obviously spiritual matters. To say this does not imply that as a consequence we cast away liturgical worship ; rather, if life is seen as worship then the meeting of the family of God becomes more precious. How often the most godly people we know do monotonous jobs and yet through them have a vision of God! When this doctrine of the Body of Christ is understood then the Church really grows—spiritual matters are not left to the clergyman ("Oh! that's his job, he's paid for it") but every Christian sees a responsibility to witness for Christ.

Secondly, whereas I agree that *sacrifice* lies right at the heart of the priestly life, I do not accept the conclusion that celibacy is therefore the mark of a sacrificial vocation. Sacrificial living is, or should be, a mark of every Christian household. Are we to assume that sacrifice lies only in complete renunciation of social responsibilities? We can never jettison our responsibility for the world, and although some are called to the monastic life, offering their lives in prayer, worship, and intercession, most will not find that path—they have an equally arduous test which is to live through and face difficulties of a different

order. Some would develop this conclusion to suggest that there is greater virtue in facing responsibilities than forsaking them; but this ignores the fact of a vocation to celibacy as well as to marriage. The people of God must be taught to live sacrificially and one way the ordinary man learns is by the example of others. The priest's family can be a remarkable influence upon a parish, by a note of simple living, contrasting with the luxury of lives around. For an example let us turn to the biography of the saintly Azariah of Dornakal: *Of His Marriage*

> "It was from the first a true partnership and all through life they grew together, she keeping pace with him, sharing alike his inward spiritual growth and his outward visible responsibilities.
> . . . Azariah's home became the very centre of his life, yet how much time he had to spend away from it!
> . . . together in their generous self-sacrifice they never shirked these partings.
> It was another part of the sacrifice that he had so little leisure to enjoy the delights of family life."
>
> C. Graham, pp. 30–1.

The claim is frequently made that as the ministry is so consuming, no woman should be asked to undertake such a sacrificial life. "A kitchen slave", a friend of mine suggested. The difficulties are obvious, but if priest and wife see a common vocation both in their marriage and in his priesthood then that life should not be impossible. Many wives (for example Service wives) see less of their husbands than does the clergy-wife, but this can be accepted as a joint-sacrifice, something to be offered to God. The celibate has the cross of loneliness to face, the married priest that of never fully having a free family life. A marriage vocation always involves sacrifice, for it is the dying of two selves that a new oneness may result.

I see the difficulty of a priest giving his children the necessary amount of attention, but the Christian family is more than the perpetual presence of both members; rather it is an atmosphere of love and devotion, which children cannot fail to absorb. In most families, in any case, the mother does the greater part of the rearing of children and father takes a more active rôle as the child's character matures. The married priest should not forget his vocation to marriage, for it is easy for him to treat his home as a "station refreshment room"; again we are brought back to 1 Timothy. Furthermore, every clergyman needs time to relax: so many are spiritually tired, because they are perpetually busy. Let them sit by the fireside on occasions, with a book, or with the children around them on the rug: their work will benefit as a result. Overwork is just as much a sin as laziness.

Thus, a vocation to the ministry should be a primary consideration, but when that vocation has been embraced by both parties, desiring to serve God in every path, then there need be no conflict of loyalties.

Every Christian in married life faces the possibility of such tension. Life is not a matter of Christ or marriage, but Christ in marriage. The suggestion that the two vocations of a married priest cannot be combined, is a false one. If one can be a married teacher, dustman or miner and still be a Christian, I do not see any different standpoint for a priest.

2. *Celibate*

Nicholas Graham, C.R.

Christian celibates are those who have, in our Lord's words, "made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake".

From very early times there was a tendency in the Church to exalt virginity as being a state somehow superior to the married state. There are more than faint traces of this view in the writings of St. Paul, himself a celibate, and those who find such passages distasteful tend to forget that no-one has taught so exalted a doctrine of Christian marriage as he. St. Paul is not nearly so unbalanced on the subject as is commonly supposed, and it is unfair to treat his apparently grudging admission that it is better to marry than to burn as if that were his last word on the subject of marriage.

Still, St. Paul can be quoted in favour of the exaltation of virginity, and a religion which centres on the Virgin Son of a Virgin Mother could hardly fail to accord a high place to that state of life.

But from what is recorded of our Lord's own teaching, there seem scant grounds for the view that virginity is to be regarded as superior to marriage. What does appear is that to those that can receive it, there may come a definite vocation to celibacy and that discipleship must always involve at least the readiness to forgo the ties of family life.

An almost febrile exaltation of virginity and a consequent "toleration" of marriage as, at best, a concession to the weakness of the flesh has sometimes characterised the thought of Christian writers, both primitive and mediaeval, and has left its mark on the Prayer Book Marriage Service. It has left its mark too in the mind of the "ordinary man" (who is by no means always an uneducated man) who vaguely believes that the Church does not approve of sex in any form, but gives it a veneer of respectability by performing marriage ceremonies. This same man is very indignant when he has cause to discover that, in performing a marriage ceremony, the Church believes herself to be doing something very high and holy indeed

and that it was he and not the Church who was concerned with a veneer of respectability.

About celibacy this same ordinary man probably has no views at all. For men, unless they are perverts, he probably thinks it is impossible ; and for women, just bad luck.

I know that the "ordinary man" does not exist, but it is necessary to use some personification of "popular" opinion as it is commonly found among the great masses of semi-, sub-, and frankly non- or anti-Christian newspaper readers in England today. I choose the symbol "ordinary man" because it does help to distinguish him from the convinced Christian ; who is, surely, extraordinary almost by definition.

It would not, however, be true to say that celibacy is widely understood or practised in the Church itself. Too often the Christian bachelor and the Christian spinster are as much the victims either of circumstances or of their own temperaments as their non-Christian counterparts. They tend to consider themselves deprived of marriage, rather than called to virginity. For it is part of the perverseness of things that the ancient Christian tradition of the exaltation of virginity should still operate remotely in the mind of the "ordinary man", where it meets with antagonism, but should have so little force in the minds of Christians where it should find a sympathetic hearing and a positive response.

The religion of the Virgin Son of the Virgin Mother has got something very positive to say to them that can receive it. It is a false dichotomy by which celibacy is thought of in terms of renunciation only and marriage only in terms of fulfilment. Christian marriage, after all, involves a very high degree of renunciation, since the choice of one man or one woman involves the renunciation of all others. By the same token it is false and misleading to speak of celibacy in terms of renunciation only (worse still, in the bargain-basement language of sacrifice, where sacrifice is just a long word for loss).

The Christian life is sacrificial and in whatever mode the sacrifice is carried out it will spring from the only motive for sacrifice ; that is love. A forced or grudging sacrifice is no sacrifice at all ; it is simply a dead loss. The essential meaning of sacrifice is doing that for love, which otherwise one would not do. It is a positive outward-going act. Moreover it does not, in its essence, involve suffering or loss ; though, in this bent world, suffering and loss are probably its inevitable accidents. The Western Church has, perhaps, concentrated too exclusively on the sufferings of our Lord, so that we tend to forget that the Passion is primarily the Action. The very word sacrifice contains the root of the verb "to make or do"—only love can make holy. The one perfect and sufficient sacrifice might still have been performed in a sinless world as it is eternally, and without pain, offered on the heavenly altar.

Love cannot exist in a vacuum. Love must be love for someone or

something. Christian marriage is obviously an expression of love in many modes. Christian celibacy, at first sight, is not so obviously so. Yet there is no other motive sufficient for the living of this particular way of sacrificial life. The unmarried Christian who in middle or late life sighs for what might have been, if only he had married, has not completely offered the sacrifice of celibacy. The unmarried Christian who takes advantage of his freedom from the cares and responsibilities of married life to live selfishly and "unto himself", has not even begun. Nothing but love can supply the motive power for creative Christian celibacy. Nothing but love can melt the frigidity of that fearful caricature of celibacy—the proud virgin, of either sex. That love must be first, love of our Lord; called out, as always, by his love for us. Such love for them that can receive it, cannot fail to find expression in love for God's children.

Probably the most obvious opportunities for the expression of celibate love are to be found in one form or another of the Religious Life. Here, in many ways, are found the analogies to marriage—life-long vows, family life (with associates no more chosen by oneself than are the members of an ordinary family), and always an ever-increasing pastoral ministry, whether chiefly in intercessory prayer or directly towards "children" of one sort or another. No-one more certainly than the vowed religious can assert the truth of our Lord's promise to those who abandon home and possessions—namely that they shall receive a hundredfold, even in this life.

It seems certain to the present writer that a deeper understanding of Christian celibacy, as a positive expression of Christian love would lead many more to hear the vocation to the Religious Life. Nor should that vocation be displayed in any other terms than a way of love answering to love. God does not call men and women to the religious life to provide parishes with cheap church-workers or to solve the man-power problems of difficult overseas dioceses. Until the true motive, namely a desire to live by the Evangelical Counsels, is appealed to and understood, it will also be forgotten that the command "to increase and multiply" was given by the God of marriage who is also the God of virginity, to all his children.

Celibate priesthood is too large a subject to be treated as a coda, yet something must be said of it since the word celibacy, when it has any place in the "popular" mind, is almost always connected with the priesthood. Here, as in various other matters, the Anglican Communion appears to attempt the most difficult and dangerous of disciplines—a discipline, indeed, which, if not recognised as such, must quickly come to have the appearance of a compromise. The 32nd article declares that it is lawful for Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness. It is the hardest discipline of all, the discipline of private judgement and discretion. The Roman Church characteristically annihilates

the problem by simply imposing celibacy on all her clergy. The Orthodox Churches with scarcely less ruthlessness say: "secular priests must be married; unmarried priests must be monks", thus creating, in effect, two classes of priesthood, since only monks are elible for the episcopate.

Do we, hereby, place too heavy a burden on our ordinands? I think we do. Far too heavy also is the pressure on most young priests and deacons, lonely in their lodgings after five years of corporate social life in college and university, fair game for every godly girl in the parish. The scales are far too heavily weighted on the side of marriage and early marriage at that. The possibility of hearing and obeying a call to celibacy—even to a temporary celibacy—is very greatly reduced by our discipline, which, except for the unusually strong-minded, is never seen as a discipline at all.

I do not know the answer. Perhaps, once more, it may approximate, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Orthodox answer: let those who have seen the priesthood in terms of celibacy at least seriously consider whether they may not be called to the Religious Life, or at any rate to some form of corporate priestly life lived under Rule. For in terms of sheer practicality, a celibate vocation needs protection, and the Church as a whole should recognise her responsibility in the matter. She should take at least as much time and trouble to make possible the realisation of a celibate vocation as she does to provide for the married ordinand or deacon.

The tenor of this article has been that, in the context of the Gospel, there is such a thing as a vocation to celibacy. If this is true, and in face of our Lord's own words it seems impossible to deny it, then, at the very least it may be said, that it will come to some who are also called to the priesthood. Indeed the latter vocation would be much more difficult to establish on scriptural grounds than the former.

There has been no question here of exalting virginity above marriage. Yet it would be a strange departure from Christian tradition if virginity were to receive no honour at all; and if it is not recognised and honoured in the Church of the virgin-born, it will certainly have no honour anywhere else.

Books

MAN AND WOMAN

D. Sherwin Bailey: *The Man-Woman Relation in Christian Thought.* (Longmans, 1959, 30/-)

Paul Evdokimov: *La Femme et le Salut du Monde.* (Casterman, 1958, *n.p.*)

Dr. Sherwin Bailey is coming to be regarded as the Anglican "Sex-Theologian" *par excellence*. He has already written one general study, and a valuable special study of Homosexuality; now he gives us this big general historical work; and promises us further and more specific studies of sexual relation. It was his misfortune that Dr. W. Graham Cole's *Sex in Christianity and Psycho-analysis* (1956) came out before his own latest book, and covered (though with less scholarship) some of the same historical ground. We cannot help wilting a little at all this material: the sexual soil is likely to be somewhat eroded very soon.

But perhaps it is the quality of this newest book by Dr. Bailey which gives us most qualms as we think with dread of the ever-expanding section in the Libraries marked "Sexotheology". Let it be said at once that the first five chapters, which are purely historical, are quite admirable, and will no doubt become a standard reference point for the—mostly depressing—history of patristic and medieval attitudes to sex. And even in the last two chapters, "The Tradition Today" and "Towards a Theology of Sex", we must welcome the emphasis upon the "relational" as opposed to the "contractual" and "procreative" views of marriage. Emphasis—yes. But there's the rub. Dr. Bailey has put all his money on the favourite ("relational sex"), but will she win?

He makes the matter a little difficult to discuss because when he tries to explain this "relational sex" he seems to throw in the sponge: "its meaning can only be discovered existentially . . . . the knowledge thus gained cannot be formulated or communicated". However, instead of remaining silent, as he logically should after this, he does talk on, so perhaps we may do the same. Perhaps our qualms can best be expressed by noting that the words "family" or "home" do not occur after p.237. This means that in his essential chapter "Towards a Theology of Sex" the relational aspect is discussed in isolation. Now, this isolation of "relational sex" is nothing new: at times it has even been institutionalised, when the man had a wife (by a *marriage de convenance*) for procreation and a mistress for "relational sex". Dr. Bailey is not, of course, recommending this pattern; but it is not clear from his account what he would say is wrong with it. He thinks that it is above all "relational sex" which distinguishes man's sex from that of the animal. Of

course there is a distinction here: but surely it is secondary, not primary. Since it is the nature of human personality that distinguishes man from beast, *all* human activities must be affected by this distinction—not only sex but also (for example) eating and drinking (the social meal, the symposium). The basic distinguishing element in human sexuality is the home which it creates (a *foyer* of human personalities unknown in the animal world). Relational sex is an important part of this, but only a part. For (1) there is plenty of evidence that merely relational sex can become very boring; (2) sociologically (as Dr. O. R. McGregor has shown, in *Divorce in England*) the family is a tougher unit than relational sex—for divorce has not in fact undermined the home-making instinct; and (3) the dramatic switch from love to hate which relational sex so often seems to cause suggests that it is not able to solve the problems it generates. In fact, the mere horizontal one-one confrontation, which "merely relational" sex implies, has to be supplemented by a third component. Man-Woman alone can bring profound personal-mutual knowledge, but also profound conflict: the only lasting pattern is Man-Woman-God, or Man-Woman-Family (which is a lesser circle within the former). Only an ultimately teleological account of sex can make either historical or theological sense of it. And I hasten to say that such a view is perfectly compatible with, indeed may be a further justification for, the Lambeth 1958 stress upon "family planning".

Dr. Bailey is so anxious to avoid any suggestion of the "subordination" of the woman that he fails to place the distinction (ontological as well as physiological) between man and woman in its true light. And here M. Evdokimov takes us to the centre, and indeed makes us realise how superficial is Dr. Bailey's thought on the whole matter. M. Evdokimov is a Russian lay theologian and philosopher, who besides being a family man has been for some years the Warden of a hostel in Paris for students (men and women) of many nationalities and different confessional traditions. Besides a charming, though slight, book on our topic (*Le Mariage, Sacrement de l'Amour*), he has written on *Dostoevsky et le problème du Mal.* Now he gives us a full length book, of which the sub-title is *Etude d'Anthropologie chrétienne sur les charismes de la femme.* It is very discursive. With a little typology, and a discussion of Ikonography, there is no limit to what subjects may not be found directly or indirectly relevant, and the problem is to know where to stop. Thus we have not only discussions of the Fall (which are germane) but of the meaning of "eternal damnation", of Jung on Job and the problem of suffering, of the mission of the Holy Spirit and the *filioque* clause (which are not). Further, English readers will find some of the scriptural exegesis delightful as an arabesque and no less fanciful; and protestants will gape to see how the Mother of Jesus can be dragged in by the corner of her blue robe to preside at every discussion. Such readers should take a deep breath and persevere, for

not only is it important for Christian unity to understand what goes on in the mind of an Orthodox theologian, but the book is full of original and revealing *aperçus* upon the nature of woman and the man-woman relationship.

His account of femine nature may seem to some old-fashioned, traditional in the pejorative sense. But it is thoroughly realistic in that it starts from the simple observation (obvious when you think of it, but who does think of it?) that "man does not possess a paternal instinct in the same way that woman possesses a maternal instinct". What is the significance of this? That "man is not paternal in his essence . . . which means that man has nothing immediate in his nature which spontaneously responds to the religious category which is that of paternity. And that means that the religious principle in the human is expressed by the woman . . . It is the maternity of the Virgin which is presented as the human figure of the divine paternity". He rejects, of course, the puritan-manichaean view of sex which dominated the Church so long—and gives as horrifying examples of it as does Dr. Bailey. Indeed, he argues that Woman is the stronger, not the weaker sex: that the traditional exegesis of the temptation of Eve is all wrong, in suggesting that Satan tried the weakest point in humanity first. On the contrary, "Eve was tempted *qua* the religious principle of human nature: it was above all at this focal point that man had to be wounded and corrupted. When once the organ most receptive, most sensitive to communion between God and man, has been disturbed, the rest followed easily enough. Adam showed no difficulty in following Eve . . ." And he supports this view biologically by pointing to Woman's greater longevity and resistance to illness. (This would be confirmed by recent statistics in this country: see R. M. Titmuss, *Essays in the Welfare State*, pp. 94–5.)

Again he will seem old-fashioned and sentimental when he lays the stress he does upon woman's power of "intuition". But he makes out a good case for it: "In his doctrine of ethics, Kant breaks the link with the transcendent, and consigns God to the rank of postulates: so quite logically he treats "love" as a sensual and pathological affection. Thus Kant shows himself to be thoroughly masculine. There are no real kantian women." (Apply this to Descartes and Hume, and what a light it throws upon the past three hundred years of empiricist philosophy!) Nietzsche, with his "woman is a pastime for warriors", shows nature revenging itself upon over-rationalised thinking. M. Evdokimov even suggests that the Ecumenical Movement has got stuck in "the confessional *non-possumus*" because it is too male-dominated and therefore not liturgical enough: "it doesn't sing: it talks and argues". And, though he is not without sympathy for the feminist movement, he points to the dangers of an artificial masculinity in modern woman which upsets the balance of society, and can lead to twin perversions in man: through the resulting malady of a psychic split, "the failure to inte-

grate the masculine and feminine elements of the soul reveal man either entirely in his unconscious, in the feminine sector of his soul, which carries him towards the masculine (sc. homosexuality); or else entirely on the surface of his consciousness, at the level where he is polygamous, and this is the vicious infinite of don-juanism".

M. Evdokimov nowhere directly discusses the contemporary "problems"—though his asides and quotations show that he is fully aware of the perplexities that still surround contraceptives, artificial insemination, collusive divorce, abortion, and the rest. But he does give us a total and profoundly theological view, in which these problems can be seen in proportion. His description of certain traditional Ikons is illuminating; and his account of the Orthodox mystique of St. John the Baptist (complementary in vocation to the Blessed Virgin) is unusual and interesting. He has read widely, and constantly lights up themes with apposite quotations. It is a book that should be made available to English readers.

MARTIN JARRETT-KERR, C.R.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

CHARLES DAVEY is Vice-Chairman of the London Marriage Guidance Council, Editor of the *Marriage Guidance Bulletin*, and Vicar of the Guild Church of St. Martin-within-Ludgate.

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Correspondence

PRAYER

Sir,

May I reply rather more tartly, than you in your charity do, to Mr. Winter who writes in your December issue on your prayer problems? Especially as I am a Black Protestant, who knows precisely what, in face of the modern Roman Church, he needs to protest about.

Why not "Mass"? It is short and it is plain historic English. It does not refer to the Roman Missal, but to the English Prayer Book of 1549, "The Supper of the Lorde and Holy Communion, commonly called the Masse", from which all our subsequent rites are derived.

What are the alternatives to Mass? "Holy Communion"? But what if one does not communicate? "The Lord's Supper"? But this omits Communion. "The Eucharist"? But we are not Greeks. "The Breaking of Bread"? But what about the wine, since we receive in both kinds? "The Liturgy" might do, but the word is now used in another sense. Why not the Mass? The only argument against the term is unhistorical sentiment, which raises the sentimentalist hackles.

As for the Rosary, you turn the handle—a meritorious labour—and the expert plays the tune—a sensible piece of hierarchic worship. Or is Mr. Winter himself an expert at addressing the Almighty? I am not, and must try a more humble approach.

And could Mr. Winter explain how we can have an Incarnation of the Godhead without a Birth? And should we not be respectful too, and openly thankful for the Lady who voluntarily undertook this stupendous task of bearing and nursing and educating her own Creator?

If only Mr. Winter would abandon thinking in terms of labels and look at the realities behind them!

Your servant,

NEWBURY. JOHN UPCOTT.

RONALD KNOX

Dear Sir,

"A strangely unsatisfactory ecclesiastical career." Unsatisfactory to whom? Why, to almost all reviewers of Evelyn Waugh's book outside the Catholic press. They would all have liked him to be something other than what he was, and his life a success story. Even your reviewer cannot think of it on a supernatural plane, the only level on which to answer the life of a priest.

Admittedly it is, humanly speaking, strange to find a priest as allergic to ceremony (except his Mass) as a low churchman, one to whom practical pastoral work was laborious, and yet one whom it is difficult to picture in the cloister. Any temptation to wonder why he became a priest at all is at once repelled by recognition of his obvious zeal for souls. There is probably no one whose sermons and conferences ("a few books") are more widely read today. And what is more likely than that he would never have prayed for anything *temporal* for himself (which is the clear meaning of the text)? The model is the prayer "Suscipe Domine" from the Spiritual Exercises, or in other words "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God . . ."

I write as a Roman Catholic, of course, but as a regular reader it was gratifying to see the book noticed at all. May I suggest one word of advice in dealing with the lives of our priests? It is a bit unfair to judge them by their dealings with the hierarchy. The English Hierarchy is something quite out of this world, a body whose collective cast of mind is incomprehensible to non-Catholics, and often that and more to their flock. But like relatives, they have to be lived with. Of course, to know all is to forgive all—there are historical reasons for their being as they are: but it is a long subject and irrelevant to this letter. Perhaps one day someone will write a book about it—Ronald Knox *could* have done.

Yours faithfully,

SUFFOLK. P. H. NASH.

Flintstone and Springing Well

CHRISTIAN UNITY has been the main thought of most of us during January. Yet I wonder whether we have not to do some hard thinking and plain speaking about it all. The original inspiration of the Week of Prayer, as it sprung from the Abbé Couturier, was clearly one in which we submitted our confusions directly and humbly to the Lord. Those who never had the privilege of knowing the Abbé in person, or are not well-informed about the aims and objects of the Week, should read Donald Allchin's small book about him. (*Faith Press* 1/6). Unhappily in England, the increasing observance of the week seems likely to be bedevilled by being turned into an occasion for the most naked and intransigent proclamation

of Roman Catholic claims. This is not only unfortunate in itself, and likely to provoke hostile reactions in many quarters; but is going to put back the good work being undertaken, largely by Anglicans, to win for the week the support of English Protestants generally, who have hitherto not supported it on anything like the scale of their continental brethren. There seems to be great difficulty within the Roman Catholic community in England. Is the pattern of its life going to reflect the intelligence and imagination of the French, the Belgians and the Germans? Or will it develop along the horrifying lines of American Roman Catholicism, so vividly portrayed in Blanchard's *Freedom and Catholic Power*? These tensions can be seen reflected in the latest issue of *The Downside Review*, which opens with an article by the French Assumptionist, George Tavard, who was responsible for sparking off the remarkable *Times* correspondence on *Catholicism Today*. He send his article with a quotation from Archbishop Feltin of Paris, writing in 1952. "The unity of the church is neither an exclusion nor a challenge. The church does not set itself in opposition, but rather in offering and service. Her unity is not closed and static; it is dynamic and centrifugal, turned to the outside". He himself continues, "In other words Catholics must show that this dynamic unity of the church is open to those who are not of us; yet, because they trust the Lord Jesus, cannot be against us. In the long run, we have to render the inner catholicity of the church, apparent to those of other institutions, to continue the never-ending task of making our invisible catholicity transparent through our visible catholicism". This is well said; but it accords ill with the unrepudiated vulgarity of public figures like Mr. Gilbert Harding, who is allowed to make insulting remarks about the Church of England in a Christmas interview in the *Sunday Times*. I cannot imagine that I was alone in awaiting some repudiation of his ill-manners from the side of one of his co-religionists. But no public word was uttered.

OUR JESUIT FRIENDS of Farm Street would do much more to commend their religion to the English people if they hastened to repudiate this kind of public vulgarity than by spending their energies upon activities like that of Fr. Stephenson, in the same issue of the *Downside Review*, where Donne and Hopkins are compared. Donne repudiated Rome, and must therefore be subtly denigrated. Hopkins left the church of his upbringing and became a Jesuit; his work must therefore somehow be upgraded in the literary scale of values. Fr. Stephenson's concluding paragraph merits quotation.

> "Yet Donne, perhaps because he lacked Hopkin's strong sense of Christ's presence and action in history, does not quite convince the reader that the truth he states is much more than a metaphor. The conceits do not always carry conviction. Unlike Hopkins, Donne did not bring all his powers to bear on the theological

issue, and conseqently in his poetry neither the conflict nor, consequently, the triumph of faith seems fully real, or at least fully realised poetically. It is, on the other hand, Hopkin's chief claim to greatness that, as if by adding a dimension to ordinary experience, his poetry realises, in all its satisfying wholeness and ultimate intelligibility, the Christian interpretation of life ; and thereby also authenticates it."

To such strange conclusions do our differing religious cultures lead us. The Athenians were increasingly uneasy about Socrates because he made "the worse appear the better reason". It is perhaps a good thing that the neutral state keeps the hemlock under lock and key.

A CORRESPONDENT has sent me the following extracts. To the well-informed the first epigram, "I would distinctly prefer freedom to sobriety", should be an easy clue to the writer. Others have a deceptively modern ring. For instance :

"The Archbishop . . . regards the clergy as a big Sixth Form, and the outer world as the parents and trustees of the big school, the church, and acts accordingly".

Or again :

"I am beginning almost to long, I have for some time been looking, for Disestablishment. It will very nearly drown us ; but it will kill the fleas".

Best of all :

"We are, I suppose, as usual *drifting* and getting nearer and nearer to our Niagara ; Cantuar at the helm, quite satisfied that an Erastian wind from St. Stephen's is carrying us steadily and safely along, the crew mutinying, the deck cargo of antiquated abuses shifting perilously, while no one dares so much as to put a pennyworth of tar in the yawning seams in the ship's sides".

It was Magee of York at the end of the last century.

EVEN SO THEY become Anglicans. Dewl Morgan has collected the stories of sixteen people who have been washed by the winds of the Spirit upon the Anglican beach. I find a notable and specific difference between these conversion tales and the familiar accounts of Roman Catholic "converts". The Roman Catholics almost invariably seem to stress the particular occasions which bring them to faith ; they leave aside, perhaps for reasons of discretion, the dogmatic principles which they embrace. The Anglicans are stronger on the side of the beliefs they live by ; but are oddly reticent about the very thing we want most to know about—the interior and personal side of the movement. But many people are becoming uneasy about this word Anglican and Anglicanism. It was the

Archbishop of Canterbury himself who reminded us, in a notable statement, that we "have no faith of our own", and Julian Casserley (surely himself a remarkable convert) used it as the title for an outstanding book. We must be careful that we are not driven into the position of making a standing place out of a temporary situation. The peculiar position of Anglican Christians in other national and cultural groups, where the surrounding pressures of other Christian traditions weigh particularly heavily, leads them to make the Anglican note rather more specific than it is meant to be. It is surely better regarded as a position of negative capability. We believe in one Lord, faith, baptism ; one eucharist, one visible body ; and we are what we are, not so much because of any positive doctrines we believe, or positive virtues we profess, but by the historic existence in the world today of other Christians who, from a point of view which is not solely ours, but which we believe could and should be theirs too, have either subtracted from the faith to a degree which makes it impossible to go along with them ; or have added to it in such a way, as to make it impossible to take up our broken communion, as if the reformation were but a regrettable episode in the dreary history of anti-clericalism. This is not an easy position to live out. We are familiar with the temptation to fall on one side or other of the abyss, and to regard ourselves either as insufficiently protestantized, or as Catholic limpets clinging to a protestant rock ; but here we have a third and dangerous point of view, which attempts to make a positive principle and virtue out of a position of negative capability. I once visited an English Cathedral and was mistaken for a minor canon showing parties round and found myself not only conducting such a party but even receiving a handsome tip at the end for doing so. I had really only dropped in to say my prayers. I hope my tour was edifying. I did say my prayers. I did put the money into the box marked For the Maintenance of the Cathedral. But clearly my views on the problems of cathedral guides, or of transitional windows, or on how to pray well while doing something else, are not of much account because of this accidental situation.

THE AUTHOR of Good King Wenceslas might be happy that his popular tune has at last passed out of the Top Ten. But he could certainly let himself go on occasions. Could we dare to speak evil of dignitaries with this kind of gusto today?

> "Does a priest at a visitation sermon preach the rankest heresy, nay Deism? The bishop shall propose his health, as if an objective Creed were a Utopian delusion. Does one of his brethren vindicate the faith, by the only means left to him—an after-dinner speech? The bishop regrets the exhibition of such differences between those whose profession is love. Does the parish curate refuse Christian burial to a Mormonite, or some other notorious

blasphemer? The bishop is extremely sorry for the state of the laws; but hints that, in the present state of affairs, the point had better be conceded. Is a gaol chaplain dismissed, by a bench of magistrates, from house and home, because he refuses to violate the Seal of Confession? The bishop cannot, on any account, interfere. But let it be a matter towards which the religious public is favourably disposed; a meeting for the Sunday closing of the Post-office, a sermon for the Church Missionary Society, a protest against the new Roman hierarchy, nay even a committee for carrying out the Great Exhibition—and who so active, who so energetic, as the bishop of the diocese?"

After much more in the same strain, J. M. Neale continues:

"What would St. Ignatius exclaim, could he have heard the primate of England, when approaching, in a charge to his clergy, the great heresy of the time, declare that, the subject being under the consideration of the Privy Council, it would be obviously improper for him to enter on its discussion! What would those great missionaries of other times, St. Boniface, St. Methodius, St. Frumentius, deem, when an Indian Bishop professes his inability to ordain native priests, because his patent only gave him authority over Englishmen?

"Let us be deeply thankful that, for their moral character, we need fear a comparison with no church under the sun. But to call their vacillation prudence, their indifference impartiality, their timidity caution, their weakness wisdom, is to deceive ourselves; and, so far as in us lies, to deceive them also."

ISKRA.

Books

PART TIME PRIESTS? Edited by ROBIN DENNISTON

(*Skeffington*, 16s.)

This is a symposium by eighteen writers, with an Epilogue by the Editor. One way of making a symposium is to choose the contributors from a narrow field, set them to work within agreed limits of their subject and coerce them into defining the terms which they use, and so hope to produce a book from which the reader can expect a conclusion, or a general drift, or at least the boundary lines of an answer, to emerge. The other way (which is perhaps the only way left to us now that the mania for democracy and the logical proof that there are no logical proofs have taken away our right to decide between the values of different opinions) is to throw a net

across the mud at the bottom of the pond and trust that a few goldfish will come to light among the welter of unlikely creatures which are dragged up in the meshes. Mr. Denniston (or his publisher?) has chosen this way: it is less "A Discussion" than a free-for-all, and his contributors have been bound by no definitions, even of his key terms: they have had a free hand to write what they think—or what they feel, or even just what they would like. Though all are interesting, not all are equally valuable or equally relevant; but there are a few goldfish all right and the trawl was worth making. The papers are so very diverse that I was irresistibly carried back to the days when I judged prize essays, and I marked Mr. Mosley down for First Prize by a clear lead on almost every count (The Bishop of Bath and Wells came second with some marks off for thinking of the Church of England instead of the Church of God; His Grace of York was too short to qualify). Mr. Mosley's writing is honest and free from woolly rhetoric: he has not dreamt of abstractions but in terms of God and people, and he has thought hard and come to a compelling conclusion. I hope indeed that his paper will kill the danger that ordination might be given to laymen because they want it for their own satisfaction.

The contributors have set themselves a variety of questions to answer:

1. If we are short of priests, or are going to be short of priests, ought we to ordain men who are in secular jobs so that they can do the distinctively priestly work of the church?
2. Ought we to have a new sort of priest to do a new sort of job, for example in industry?
3. Ought the clergy to know more about laymen?
4. Do we need a supplementary ministry to do the work which is within the power of laymen, and so free the priests for their own distinctive work?

In the short space of this review, I can speak only of those who have tackled Question 1. No. 2 does not seem to me to be implied in the cryptic title of this book, and the answer to No. 4 does not depend on ordaining men to be priests at all. Obsessed with No. 3, some of the contributors have spent too long urging that if laymen are admitted into priests' orders, "the church will be greatly enriched by "this or that knowledge or experience which only laymen have—which is to argue that you get much richer by taking your money out of one pocket and putting it into another. Not all the contributors have any clear notion of what are priestly functions and what are not, and the catch-phrase about "the priesthood of the laos" is sometimes adopted to blur that distinction. I think a clear line might have been drawn between the priesthood of all believers and the priesthood of priests by the commission which is given to priests to administer the sacraments; I cannot recall any other of the powers of priesthood which is not given to laypeople.

The real answer to the question mark in the title is indeed implicit within the book, not in new thinking but in quotations—and one of them, oddly enough, is a quotation from the Bishop of Southwell which is far more powerful than his own contribution! In the Bishop's own paper, he makes the surprising suggestion that some people who are already in certain jobs which are humanitarian and therefore exercising one sort of ministry in the "diversities of gifts" should be given the quite different Ministry of the Word and Sacraments as a demonstration that diversities of gifts are the same gift. It is on page 68, in a quotation made by John Porter, that Dr. Barry's wisdom gives the first clue to the ministry that is wanted, but it is not pursued until David Paton, in his paper, finds the development in the thought of Roland Allen. Only then do we begin to realise that the risk for us is no more and no less than the risk for St. Paul, and that we shall not improve on the solution which the Spirit showed to him.

The practice of Hong Kong, well described by the Bishop, is not for us the way forward but a blind alley. There the auxiliary priest is a diocesan official, visiting the congregations from the realms above—a kind of priesthood which I should have thought belonged to the late Middle Ages; it may still be appropriate in a new church in the mission field. But "the Apostles appointed elders *in every church*", and they maintained the daily bread of the sacraments, even if the Apostles also took to themselves Assistant Apostles to work from headquarters.

G.C.D.

THE END OF A GOLDEN STRING by Robert Nelson.
Faith Press 5/–.

In their discussion on Prayer Problems, *Prism's* contributors have sometimes complained of the lack of practical guidance given by clerics to laymen about prayer. This small book by the late Bishop of Middleton does a lot to fill this need.

It is practical without being condescending; properly demanding without appearing impossible. It has almost the unique distinction of being a book about prayer for laymen which does not send a laymen's heart into his boots.

In fact, it lifts it up. We are told what to do; why to do it; how to start and how to go on. We can understand the language; and the instructions fit in with what we believe and what we experience.

So that now all we have to do is to do it! Perhaps *Prism's* contributors (and readers?) can save five shillings out of their postage.

N.M.

A TRIBUTE TO STANLEY SPENCER

Once I rebuilt a boat and lived on it while I painted. Taking the boat down the Thames I stopped at Cookham, quite by chance, and stayed there for a year.

At the end of that time I was moved to go to Stanley Spencer's house, hoping he would be able to help me—hoping even more, perhaps, that he would see in my work what I knew was there. I trudged up the hill to his house, pushing my work in front of me in a borrowed pram (by no means an original idea, for Spencer himself could always be seen trundling around Cookham with his easel, canvas and paints loaded on a child's push-chair).

The person who opened the door was surprising—I asked him if he would be kind enough to see my work. He invited me in at once and before we parted made it clear that he accepted me as a fellow artist. We looked at his drawings together and he showed me how he worked.

Sickert wrote that Spencer was the greatest religious painter of the last five hundred years. I too believe this; his narrative work could always be understood, and there was always passion in his paint and religious vision in his drawing.

He took a great pride in being an artist. It was also to him something utterly natural, something that broke down all barriers of time, race, class. He belonged to an immortal fellowship. Once, in a bookshop which used to be in Cookham, he was looking through a volume of Michaelangelo reproductions when Ethel, the local postwoman, came in.

He said to her suddenly: "Look at that, Ethel. Isn't it wonderful?" Ethel looked at the drawing of a pair of hands and said: "It's lovely. Is it one of yours, Stanley?"

"No," he said, still absorbed in the drawing. "It's some other bloke's."

Some found him naive, but in reality this was an unspoiled simplicity and underneath it was a very fine intelligence. He knew a great deal about the hawkers and stranglers of the art world; though, as they do to all artists, I believe they seriously affected his work.

He told me, one afternoon, how he was hoping that one of our cathedrals was going to commission a religious work from him. Instead this commission went to a person whose work is based on a gimmick and who made a pastiche. In all his life Spencer, this great religious painter, never received a commission from the church. Nothing can show more plainly how we treat our real artists.

A true visionary and religious to the core of his being, the Burghclere chapel is his monument.

K. R. Massey.